Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, & William of Cloudesle.

Mery it was in the greene forest,
Among the leaves greene:
Whereas men hunt east & west,
With bowes & arrowes keene,
To raise the Deere out of their den,
Such sights have not oft been seen;
As by thre yemen of the north countrey,
By them it is I meane,
The one of them hight Adam Bel,
The other Clym of the Clough,
The third was William of Cloudesle,
An archer good enough.
They were outlawed for venyson,
These yemen everychone;
They swore them bretheren upon a day,
To Englishwood for to gone.
Now lith & listen, gentlemen,
That of myrthe loveth to hear: myrthe
Two of them were single men,
The the third had a wedded fere.
Wyllyam was the wedded man,
Much more than was his care:
He sayd to his bretheren upon a day,
To Carlyll he wold fare;
For to speak with fair Alyce his wife,
And with his children thre.
By my troth, sayd Adam bel,
Not by the counsell of me:
For if ye go to Carlyll, brother,
And from this wild wode wende,
If the justice may you take,
Your lyfe were at an ende.
If that I come not to morrow, brother,
By tyme to you agayne,
Trust not els but that I am take,
Or els that I am slayne.

He

He take his leave of his brethren two,
And to Carleil he is gon,
There he knocked at his owen windowe
Shortly & anone.
Where be you fayre Alyce my wyfe, he said
And my Children three?
Lyghtly let in thyne owen husbande,
Wyllyam of Cloudesle.
Alas! then sayd fair Alyce,
And sighed wondrous sore,
Thys place hath ben besette for you
This halfeyere and more.
Now am I here, sayd Cloudeslye,
I wold that in I were;
Now fetche us meate & drink ynough,
And let us make good chere.
She fetched hym meate & drynk plentye,
Lyke a true wedded wyfe:
And pleased hym with that she had,
Whom she loved as her lyfe.
There lay an old wyfe in that place,
A little besyde the fyre,
Which wyllyam had found of charytye,
More than seven yere.
Up she rose & forth she goes,
Evel mote she spede therefore;
For she had not set no fote on grounde
In seven yere before.
She went unto the justice hall,
As fast as she could hye;
Thys nyght is come unto thys town
Wyllyam of Cloudeslye.
Thereof the justice was full fayne,
And so was the sheriff also:
Thou shalt not travel hyther, dame, for nought,
Thy meed thou shalt have or thou go.
They gave to her a ryght good goune,
Of scarlet and of graine,
She toke the gyft, & home she went,
And couched her down agayne,

They

They ryssed the town of mery Caleile,
In all the hast they can;
And came thronging to Wyllyams house,
As fast as they might gone;
There they besett that good yeman
About on every syde;
Wyllyam heard great noyse of folkes,
That theytherward they hyed.
Alyce opened a back window,
And loked all about,
She was ware of the justice & shirife both,
Wyth a full great route.
Alas! treason, cryed Alyce,
Ever wo may thou be!
Go into my chamber, my husband, she sayd,
Sweet Wyllyam of Cloudesle.
He toke his sweard & his bucler,
His bow & his children thre,
And went into his strongest chamber,
Where he thought surest to be.
Fair Alyce like a lover true,
Took a pollax in her hand;
He shall be dead that here cometh in,
Thys dore, whyle I may stand.
Cloudesly bent a well-good bowe,
That was of trusty tre,
He smote the justice on the brest,
That his arrow brest in thre.
A curse on his heart, sayd Wyllyam,
Thys day thy cote dyd on,
If it had ben no better than mine,
It had gon nere thy bone.
Yeld the cloudesle, sayd the justice,
Thy bowe & thy arrowes the fro.
A curse on hys heart, sayd fayre Alyce,
That my husband counceileth so.
Set fyre on the house, sayd the sherife,
Syth it wyll no better be,
And brenne we therin William, he sayd,
Hys wyfe & hys children thre. They

They fyred the house in many a place,
The fyre flew up on hye;
Alas! then cryed fayre Alyce,
I se we here shall dy.
Wyllyam Openyd a back wyndow,
That was in his chamber hye,
And wyth shetes let downe hys wyfe,
And eke hys chyldren thre.
Have here my treasure, sayd William,
My wyfe & my chyldren thre,
For Christes love do them no harme,
But wreke you all on me.
Wyllyam shot so wonderous well,
Till hys arrows were all agoe,
And the fyre so fast upon hym fell,
That hys bowstryngs brent in two.
The sparkles brend & fell upon
Good wyllyam of Cloudesle:
Than was he a wofull man, & sayd,
Thys is a cowards death to me.
Lever had I, sayd wyllyam,
With my sworde in the route to renne,
Then here among myne Enemyes wode
Thus cruelly to bren:
He toke his sword & his bucler,
And among them all he ran,
Where the people were most in prece,
He smote down many a man.
There myght no man abyde hys stroke,
So fersly on them he ran:
Then threw wyndows, & dores on hym,
And so toke that good yeman.
There they hym bound both hand & fote,
And in a depe dongeon cast:
Now Cloudesle, sayd the hye justyce,
Thou shalt be hanged in hast.

One Vow

One bow shal I make said the Sheriffe
a paire of new gallowes shal I for thee make,
And all the gates of Carlel shal be shut,
there shal no man come in thereat:
There shal not help Clim of the Clough
nor yet Adam Bell,
Though they came with a thousand moe,
nor all the deuils in hell.
Early in the morning the Justice arose
to the gates fast gan he gone,
And commaunded to be shut close
lightly euery chone:
Then went he to the Market place
as fast as he could hie,
A paire of new gallowes there did he set vp
beside the Pillorie.
A little boy stode them among
and asked what meant that gallow tree?
They said to hang a good yeoman
called William of Cloudesle.
That little boy was towne Swinehead
and kept faire Mice Swine,
Full oft he had seene Cloudesle in the wood
and giuen him there to dine.
He went out at a creuice of the wall
and lightly to the wood he ran,
There met he with these wight yong men
hastily and anone.
Alas then said that little boy,
ye tarry here all too long,
Cloudesle is taken and dampned to death
already for to hang.
Alas then said good Adam Bell
that euer we saw this day,
We might haue tarried here with vs
so oft as we did him pray.
We might haue dwelled in greene Forrest
vnder these shadowes shene,

And kept both him and vs at reſt
out of all trouble and teene.
Adam bent a right good bow
a great Hart ſowne he had ſlaine,
Take that child he ſaid to thy dinner
and bring me mine arrowe againe.
Now goe we hence ſaid theſe wighty yeomen,
tarry we no longer heere,
We ſhal him borrow by Gods grace,
though we buy it full deere.
To Carlell went theſe good Yeomen
in a merry morning of May,
Heere is a fit of Clowdeſle,
and another is for to ſay.

AND when they came to merry Carlell
in a faire morning tide,
They found the gates ſhut them vnto
round about on every ſide.
Alas then ſaid good Adam Bell
that euer we were made men,
Theſe gates be ſhut ſo wonderous well
that we may not come therein.
Then ſpake Clim of the Clough,
with a wile we will vs in bring,
Let vs ſay we be meſſengers
ſtraight come from our King.
Adam ſaid I haue a letter, well
now let vs wiſely worke,
We will ſay we haue the Kings ſeale,
I hold the Porter no Clarke.
Then Adam Bell beate at the gate
with ſtrokes great and ſtrong,
The Porter heard ſuch noiſe thereat,
and to the gate he throng.
Who is there ſaid the Porter
that maketh all this knocking,
We be two meſſengers ſaid Clim of the Clough

be

be come right from our King.
We haue a Letter, said Adam Bell
to the Justice we must it bring,
Let vs in our message to doe
that we were againe to the King.
Here commeth none in said the Porter
by him that died on a tree,
Till that a false theefe be hanged
called William of Cloudesle.
Then spake the good yeoman Clim of the Clough,
and swore by Marie free,
If that we stand long without
like a thiefe hanged thou shalt be:
Loe here we haue the Kings seale,
what lurden art thou wood?
The Porter wend it had bene so
and lightly did off his hood.
Welcome is my Lords seale he said
for that ye shall come in:
He opened the gate full shortly,
an euill opening for him.
Now are we in said Adam Bell
whereof we are right faine,
But Christ knowes that harrowed hell
how we shal come out againe.
Had we the keyes, said Clim of the Clough
right wel then should we spéd:
Then might we come out wel enough
when we see time and néd.
They called the Porter to counsell
and wrong his necke in two,
And cast him in a depe dungeon,
and toke his keyes him fro.
Now am I Porter, said Adam Bell,
see brother the keyes haue we here,
The worst Porter in merry Carlel
that ye had this hundred yeere.
Now we will our bowes bend,

into the towne will we goe,
For to deliuer our dere brother,
that lieth in care and woe.
Then they bent their good bowes,
and loked their strings were round,
The Market place in merry Carlel
they beset in that stound:
And as they loked them beside,
a payre of new gallowes there they see,
And the Justice with a quest of Squires,
that had iudged Cloudesle there hanged to be,
And Cloudesle himselfe lay ready in a Cart
fast bound both fote and hand,
And a strong rope about about his necke
alreadie for to hang.
The Justice called to him a Lad
Cloudesles clothes he should haue
To take the measure of that yeoman,
and thereafter to make his graue.
I haue seene as great meruaile said Cloudesle
as betweene this and prime,
He that maketh a graue for me,
himselfe may lie therein.
Thou speakest proudlie said the Justice,
I will thee hang with my hand,
Full wel heard this his brethren two
there still as they did stand.
Then Cloudesle cast his eye aside
and saw his two brethren
At a corner of the Market place
with their bowes in their hand
ready the Justice to chase.
I see comfort said Cloudesle,
yet hope I will to fare.
If I might haue my hands at will,
right little might I care.
Then spake good Adam bell,
to Clim of the Clough so fre,

Brother see you marke the Justice well,
loe yonder you may him see,
At the Sherieffe shote I will
strongly with an arrow kéene,
A better shote in merrie Carlel
this seauen yéere was not séene.
They losed they? arrowes both at once,
of no man they had d?ead
The one hit the Justice, the other the Sherife
that both their sides can bléede.
All men voided that them stod nie
when the Justice fell to the ground,
And the Sherife nie him by,
either had his deaths woune.
All the Cittizens fast gan flée,
for they durst no longer abide:
There lightly they losed Clondesle
where he with ropes lay tide:
William start to an officer of the towne,
his Axe out of his hand he w?ong,
On each side he smote them downe,
him thought he tarried all to long.
William said to his brethere? two
this day let vs liue and die,
If euer you haue néede as I haue now
by the same shall you find by me.
They shot so wel in that tide
for their strings were of silke fine,
That they kept the stréetes on euery side,
that battaile long did indure.
They fought together like brethren true,
like hardie men and bold,
Many a man to the ground they threw,
and made many a hart cold.
But when their arrowes were all gone,
men préesed to them full fast,
They drew their swords then anon,
and their bowes from them cast.



They

They went lightlie on their way,
with swords and bucklers round,
By that it was mid of the day,
they made many a wound.
There was many an out horne in Carlel blowne
and the bells backward did ring,
Many a woman said alas,
and many their hands did wring.
The Mayor of Carlel forth come was,
and with him a full great rout,
These yeoman dread him full sore
for of their liues they stood in great doubt.
The Mayor came armed a ful great pace
with a Pollar in his hand,
Many a strong man with him was
there in that stoure to stand.
The Mayor smote at Cloudesle with his bill,
his bucklers brast in two,
Full many a yeoman with great euill
alas treason they cried for woe.
Keepe wée the gates fast they bad,
that these traytors thereout not goe,
But all for nought was that they wrought,
for so fast downe they were layd,
Till they all thrée that so manfully fought
were gotten out at a braid.
Haue here your keies said Adam Bell
mine office here I forsake,
If you do by my counsel
a new Porter you doe make:
He threw their keyes at their head
and bad them euill to thrive,
And all that letteth any good yeoman
to come and comfort his wife.
Thus be these good yeomen gone to the wood
as lightly as leafe on lind,
They laugh and be merry in their mood,
their enemies were far behind.

When

When they came to Englith wood
vnder the trustie tré,
There they found bowes full good
and arrowes full great plentie.
So God me helpe said Adam Bell,
and Clim of the Clough so frée,
I would we were in merry Carlel,
before that faire manie:
They sate them downe and made good chére
and eate and drunke ful well,
Héere is a fit of these wight yeoman,
another I will you tell.

AS they sate in Englith wood
vnder their trustie tré,
Them thought they heard a Woman weepe
but her they might not sée:
Sore then sighed faire Alice,
and said alas that euer I saw this day,
For now is my déere husband slaine
alas and away.
Might I haue spoken with his déere brethren,
or with either of them twaine
To shew to them what him befell
my hart were out of paine.
Cloudesle walked a little a side
and looked vnder the grene wood linde,
He was ware of his wife and children three
full woe in hart and mind.
Welcome wife then said William
vnder this trustie tré.
I had wend yesterday by sweet S. John
thou shouldest me neuer had sén.
Now well is me she said that ye be héere,
my hart is out of woe,
Dame he said be merrie and glad,
and thanke my brethren two.
Héereof to speake said Adam Bell
I wis it is no bote,

The meat that we muſt ſup withall
it runneth yet faſt on fote.
Then went they downe into the lawnd,
theſe Noble men all three:
Each of them ſlew a Hart of Greece,
the beſt they could there ſee.
Haue here the beſt Alice my Wife,
ſaid William of Cloudelle,
Becauſe ye ſo boldlie ſtood by me
when I was ſlaine full nie.
Then they went to ſupper
with ſuch meate as they had:
And thanked God for their fortune
they were both merrie and glad.
And when they had ſupped well
certaine without any leace,
Cloudelle ſaid we will to our King
to get vs a Charter of peace.
Alice ſhal be at our ſoiourning
in a Nunry here beſide:
My two ſonnes ſhal with her goe
and there they ſhall abide.
My eldeſt ſonne ſhal goe with me,
for his I haue no care,
And he ſhal bring you word againe
how that we doe fare.
Thus be theſe good yemen to London gone
as faſt as they might hie,
Till they came to the Kings Pallace
there they would neede be.
And when they came to the Kings Court
vnto the Pallace gate,
Of no man would they aſke leaue,
but boldly went in thereat:
They proceeded preſently into the hall
of no man they had dread,
The Porter came after and did them call,
and with them he gan to chide.

The Vsher said, yeomen what would ye haue,
I pray you tell me:
You might make Officers thenne,
good sirs from whence be ye?
Sir, we be outlawes of the Forrest,
certaine without any leace,
And hether we be come to the King
to get vs a Charter of peace.
And when they came before the King,
as it was the Law of the land,
They kneeled downe without letting,
and each held vp his hand.
They said, Lord we beseech thee here
that ye will grant vs grace,
For we haue slaine your fat fallow Deere
in many a sundry place.
What be your names then said our King,
anon that you tell me,
They said, Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,
and William of Cloudelle.
Be ye those same theues said our King
that men haue told to me?
Here to God I make a vow
ye shal be hanged all three.
Ye shal be dead without mercy
as I am King of this Land,
He commaunded his Officers euery chone
fast one them to lay hand.
There they toke this good yeoman
and arrested them all three.
So may I thrine, said Adam Bell,
this game liketh not me:
But good Lord we beseech you now
that ye will grant vs grace,
Inasmuch as we do to your cope,
or else that we may from you passe
With such weapons as we haue here,
till we be out of your place.

And if we liue this hundreth yéere
we will aske of you no grace.
Yée speake proudlie said the King,
ye shall be hanged all three:
That were great pittie said the Quéene,
if any grace might be,
My Lord, when I came first into this Land
to be your wedded wife,
The first bone that I would aske,
you would graunt me belike:
And I asked ye neuer none till now,
therefore good Lord grant it me:
Now aske it Madam, said the King
and granted shall it be.
Then good Lord I you beseech
these yeoman grant ye me.
Madam, ye might haue asked aboue
that should haue béene worth them all three.
Ye might haue asked towers and townes
Parks and Forrests plentie.
None so pleasant to my pay she said,
nor none so léefe to me.
Madam, sith it is your desire,
your asking granted shall be,
But I had leuer haue giuen you
good Market townes three:
The Quéene was a glad woman,
and said, Lord gramarcie.
I dare vndertake for them
that true men they shall be:
But good Lord speake some merry word
that they may comfort sée.
I graunt you grace then said our King
wash fellowes and to meate goe yée.
They had not sitten but a while
certaine without leasing,
There came two Messengers out of the North
with Letters to our King.

And when they came before the King,
they knéeled downe vpon their knee,
And said your Officers greet you well,
of Carlell in the North Country.
How fareth my Iustice (said the King)
and my Sheriffe also,
Sir they be slaine without leasing,
and many an Officer moe.
Who hath them slaine (said the King)
anone that you tell me,
Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,
and William of Cloudesle.
Alas for ruth then said our King,
my hart is wonderous sore,
I had leuer then a thousand pound,
I had knowne this before,
For I haue granted them grace,
and that forthinketh me:
But had I knowne all this before,
they had béene hanged all thrée.
The King he opened the Letter anone,
himselfe he read it tho,
And there found how these outlawes had slaine
thrée hundred men and moe,
First the Iustice, and the Sheriffe,
and the Maior of Carlell towne,
Of all the Constables and Catchpoles,
aliue were left not one.
The Bayliffes and the Bedels both,
and the Sargeants of the Law,
And forty Forresters of the fee,
these outlawes haue yslaw,
And broke his Parks, and slaine his déere,
ouer all they chose the best:
So perrilous outlawes as they were,
walked not by East nor West.
When the King this letter had read,
in hart he sighed sore.

Take vp the table he said,
for I may eate no more:
The King then called his best Archers,
to the Butts with him to goe:
I will see these fellowes shoote he said
that in the North haue wrought this woe.
The Kings bow men buskt them blithe,
and the Quenes Archers also,
So did these wight yeoman,
with them they thought to goe.
There twice or thrice they shot about
for to assay their hand,
There was no shoote these yeoman shot,
that any prick might stand.
Then spake William of Cloudesle,
by God that for me died,
I hold him neuer a good archer
that shooteth at Buts so wide.
Whereat then said our King,
I pray thee tell to me:
At such a But sir he said,
as men vse in my Country.
William went into the field,
and his two brethren with him,
There they set vp two Hassel rods
twentie score paces betweene.
I hold him an archer said Cloudesle
that yonder wand cleaued in two.
Here is no such (said the King)
for no man can so do.
I shall assay sir, said Cloudesle,
or that I further goe;
Cloudesle with a bearing arrow
claue the wand in two.
Thou art the best archer then said our king.
forsoth that euer I see,
And yet for your loue said William,
I will doe more maistrie,

I haue a sonne is seauen yere old,
he is to me full dere,
I will tie him to a stake
all shall se that be here,
And lay an Apple vpon his head,
and goe fire score paces him fro,
And I my selfe with a broad arrow,
shal cleaue the apple in two.
Now hast thé then (said the King)
by him that died on a tré,
But if thou do not as thou hast said
hanged should thou be.
And thou touch his head or golwne
in sight that men may sé,
By all the Saints that be in heauen,
I shal you hang all thré.
That I haue promised said William,
I neuer will forsake,
And there euen before the King,
in the earth he drone a stake:
And bound thereto his eldest sonne,
and bad him stand still thereat,
And turned the childs face from him
because he should not start.
An apple vpon his head he set
and then his bow he bent,
Fire score paces they were met,
and thether Cloudesle went.
There hé drew out a faire broad arrow,
his bow was great and long.
He set that arrow in his bow,
that was both stiffe and strong.
He prayed the people that were there
that they would still stand,
For he that shooteth for such a wager,
had neede of a stedfast hand.
Much people prayed for Cloudesle,
that his life saued might be.

And when he made him ready to shote,
there was many a weping eye,
Thus Cloudesle claue the apple in two
as many a man might se,
Now God forbid then said the king,
that thou shouldst shote at me.
I giue the xviii. pence a day,
and my bow shalt thou beare,
And ouer all the North country
I make the chiefe Rider.
And I giue the xiii. pence a day said the Quéne,
by God and by my fay,
Come fetcht thy paiment when thou wilt,
no man shal say the nay.
William I make the a Gentleman,
of clothing and of fe,
And thy two brethren yeoman of my chamber,
for they are louely to se,
Your sonne for he is tender of age
of my Wine seller shal he be,
And when he commeth to mans estate,
better aduaunced I wil him se.
And William, bring me your wife said ỹ quéne
me longeth her for to se,
She shal be my chiefe Gentlewoman
to gouerne my Nurserie,
The yeoman thanked them full curteously,
and sayd to some Bishop wil we wend,
Of all the synnes that we haue done
to be assoiled at his hand.
So forth be gone these good yeomen,
as fast as they can hie,
And after came and liued with the king,
and died good yeomen all three:
Thus endeth the lines of these good yeomen,
God send them eternall blisse,
And all that with hand bow shoteth,
that of heauen may neuer misse.

FINIS.

And when he made him ready to shoote,
there was many a weeping eye,
Thus Cloudesle claue the apple in two
as many a man might see,
Now God forbid then said the King,
that thou shouldst shoote at me.
I giue thee xviii. pence a day,
and my bow shalt thou beare,
And ouer all the North-country
I make thee chiefe Rider.
And I giue thee xiii. pence a day said the Queene,
by God and by my fay,
Come fetcht thy paiment when thou wilt,
no man shal say thee nay.
William I make thee a Gentleman,
of clothing and of fee,
And thy two brethren yeoman of my chamber,
for they are louely to see,
Your sonne for he is tender of age
of my Wine-seller shal he be,
And when he commeth to mans estate,
better aduaunced I wil him see.
And William, bring me your wife said ye queene
me longeth her for to see,
Shee shall be my chiefe Gentlewoman
to gouerne my Nurserie,
The yeoman thanked them full curteously,
and sayd to some Bishop wil we wend,
Of all the sinnes that we haue doone
to be assoiled at his hand.
So forth be gone these good yeomen,
as fast as they can hie,
And after came and liued with the King,
and died good yeomen all three:
Thus endeth the lines of these good yeomen,
God send them eteenall blisse,
And all that with hand-bow shooteth,
that of heauen may neuer misse.

FINIS.